

GSA Board of Contract Appeals

6101.35

finality of a decision or suspend its operation.

6101.34 Harmless error [Rule 134].

No error in the admission or exclusion of evidence, and no error or defect in any ruling, order, or decision of the Board, and no other error in anything done or omitted to be done by the Board will be a ground for granting a new hearing or for vacating, reconsidering, modifying, or otherwise disturbing a decision or order of the Board unless refusal to act upon such error will prejudice a party or work a substantial injustice. At every stage of the proceedings the Board will disregard any error or defect that does not affect the substantial rights of the parties.

6101.35 Award of costs [Rule 135].

(a) *Applications for costs.* An appropriate party in a proceeding before the Board may apply for an award of costs, including if applicable an award of attorney fees, under the Equal Access to Justice Act, 5 U.S.C. 504, or any other provision that may entitle that party to such an award, subsequent to the Board's decision in the proceeding. For purposes of this section, "decision" includes orders of dismissal resulting from settlement agreements that bring to an end the proceedings before the Board.

(b) *Time for filing.* A party seeking an award may submit an application no later than 30 calendar days after a final disposition in the underlying appeal. In the case of an appeal that is adjudicated, the Board's decision becomes final (for purposes of this section) when it is not appealed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit within the time permitted for appeal or, if the decision is appealed, when the time for petitioning the Supreme Court for certiorari has expired. In the case of an appeal that is resolved as a result of settlement, the Board's disposition becomes final (for purposes of this section) after receipt by the applicant of the order granting or dismissing the appeal.

(c) *Application requirements.* An application for costs shall:

(1) Identify the applicant and the appeal for which costs are sought, and the amount being sought;

(2) Establish that all applicable prerequisites for an award have been satisfied, including a succinct statement of why the applicant is eligible for an award of costs;

(3) Be accompanied by an exhibit fully documenting any fees or expenses being sought, including the cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, project, or similar matter. The date and a description of all services rendered or costs incurred shall be submitted for each profession firm or individual whose services are covered by the application, showing the hours spent in connection with the proceeding by each individual, a description of the particular services performed by specific date, the rate at which each fee has been computed, any expenses for which reimbursement is sought, and the total amount paid or payable by the applicant on account of the sought-after costs. Except in exceptional circumstances, all exhibits supporting applications for fees or expenses sought shall be publicly available. The Board may require the applicant to provide vouchers, receipts, or other substantiation for any costs claimed and/or to submit to an audit by the Government of the claimed costs;

(4) Be signed by the applicant or an authorized officer, employee, or attorney of the applicant;

(5) Contain or be accompanied by a written verification under oath or affirmation, or declaration under penalty of perjury, that the information provided in the application is true and correct;

(6) If the applicant asserts that it is a qualifying small business concern, contain evidence thereof; and

(7) If the application requests reimbursement of attorney fees that exceed the statutory rate, explain why an increase in the cost of living or a special factor, such as the limited availability of qualified attorneys for the proceedings involved, justifies such fees.

(d) *Proceedings.* (1) Within 30 calendar days after receipt by the respondent of an application under this section, the respondent may file an answer. The answer shall explain in detail any objects to the award requested and set out the legal and factual bases supporting the

respondent's position. If the respondent contends that any fees for consultants or expert witnesses for which reimbursement is sought in the application exceed the highest rate of compensation for expert witnesses paid by the agency, the respondent shall include in the answer evidence of such highest rate.

(2) Further proceedings shall be held only by order of the Board and only when necessary for full and fair resolution of the issues arising from the application. Such proceedings shall be minimized to the extent possible and shall not include relitigation of the case on the merits. A request that the Board order further proceedings under this section shall describe the disputed issues and explain why additional proceedings are necessary to resolve those issues.

(e) *Decision.* Any award ordered by the Board shall be paid pursuant to 6101.36.

6101.36 Payment of Board awards [Rule 136].

(a) *Generally.* When permitted by law, payment of Board awards may be made in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 1304. Awards by the Board pursuant to the Equal Access to Justice Act shall be directly payable by the respondent agency over which the applicant has prevailed in the underlying appeal.

(b) *Conditions for payment.* Before a party may obtain payment of a Board award pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1304, one of the following must occur:

(1) Both parties must, by execution of a Certificate of Finality, waive their rights to relief under 6101.32 and 6101.33 and also their rights to appeal the decision of the Board; or

(2) The time for filing an appeal must expire.

(c) *Procedure for filing of certificates of finality.* Whenever the Board issues a decision or an order awarding a party any amount of money, it will attach to the copy of the decision sent to each party forms such as those illustrated in the appendix to this part and part 6102. The conditions for payment prescribed in paragraph (b)(1) of this section are satisfied if each of the parties returns a completed and duly executed copy of this form to the Board. When the form

is executed on behalf of an appellant or applicant by an attorney or other representative, proof of signatory authority shall also be furnished. Upon receipt of completed and duly executed Certificates of Finality from the parties, the Board will forward a copy of each such certificate (together with proof of signatory authority, if required) and a certified copy of its decision to the United States Department of the Treasury to be certified for payment.

(d) *Procedure in absence of certificate of finality.* When one or both of the parties fails to submit a duly executed Certificate of Finality, but the conditions for payment have been satisfied as provided in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, the appellant or applicant may file a written request that the Board forward its decision to the United States Department of the Treasury for payment. Thereupon, the Board will forward a copy of that request and a certified copy of its decision to the United States Department of the Treasury to be certified for payment.

(e) *Stipulated award.* When an appeal is settled, the parties may file with the Board a stipulation setting forth the amount of the award and stating

(1) That they will not seek reconsideration of, or relief from, the Board's decision, and

(2) That they will not appeal the decision. The Board will adopt the parties' stipulation by decision. The Board's decision under this paragraph is an adjudication of the case on the merits.

6101.37 Record on review of a Board decision [Rule 137].

(a) *Record on review.* When a party has appealed a Board decision to the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, the record on review shall consist of the decision sought to be reviewed, the record before the Board as described in 6101.12, and such other material as may be required by the Court of Appeals.

(b) *Notice.* At the same time a party seeking review of a Board decision files a notice of appeal, that party shall provide a copy of the notice to the Board.

(c) *Filing of certified list of record materials.* Promptly after service upon the